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Contagious Equine Metritis

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public. When I was there, work was beginning on a new waterfowl exhibit and also a large gorilla enclosure. With such plans, a visit to Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle will be even more a delight in the future than it is now.

Thank you for joining me! I hope that you have enjoyed the tour and at the same time learned a few things. Though this was just a partial introduction to some of the characters at the zoo, the friends I have introduced you to can now be considered friends of yours. The veterinarian in this zoo as in others plays an important part in keeping the animals I know at the zoo healthy. Through knowledge of nutrition, disease conditions, and most importantly preventative health care, the animals appear healthy and more enjoyable to the public. As more zoos are expanding and upgrading their animal health care

facilities, the opportunities for zoo veterinarians will still be there, though there are only so many zoos!

Through my zoo preceptorship, I was able to learn new methods of restraint for animals, experience different behavioral traits, and the attempts at maintaining the health of the animals. Most important of all though, my stay at the zoo showed me the remarkable diversity that can be found among the creatures in the kingdom of nature.

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Contagious Equine Metritis

Contagious Equine Metritis (CEM), a uterine infection of horses, has recently appeared in Central Kentucky. This is the first time the disease has been detected in the United States. Kentucky authorities report that two or three stallions may be infected, with possibly 40 mares having been exposed to the disease.

The disease is highly contagious. It is most commonly spread by breeding, but can be spread through handling or examination using contaminated instruments. CEM results in infertility and abortion.

In mares, signs of the disease usually appear 2 to 3 days after exposure, and include a grayish-white purulent vaginal discharge. Diagnosis is usually based on the signs and the laboratory culture of the bacteria. At the present time, there is no effective blood test that can be used to detect CEM. Stallions, even though infected, usually are unaffected

by the disease.

The CEM organism is believed to be gram-negative coccobacillus, which is susceptible to treatment with antibiotics. Infected animals often respond to treatment and recoveries have been reported following a period of non-breeding. CEM can be in remission; consequently, negative cultures can be misleading.

Quarantine of infected animals, artificial insemination, and other preventive measures afford the best means of controlling CEM. To avoid transmitting the disease from horse to horse, handlers, trainers, and all others involved with breeding animals must take great care to maintain hygienic conditions, using disposable gloves, gowns, and boots, and carefully cleaning any and all equipment used to examine suspected horses. (from *AVMA News Release*, March 16, 1978.)